

# Investing in Management

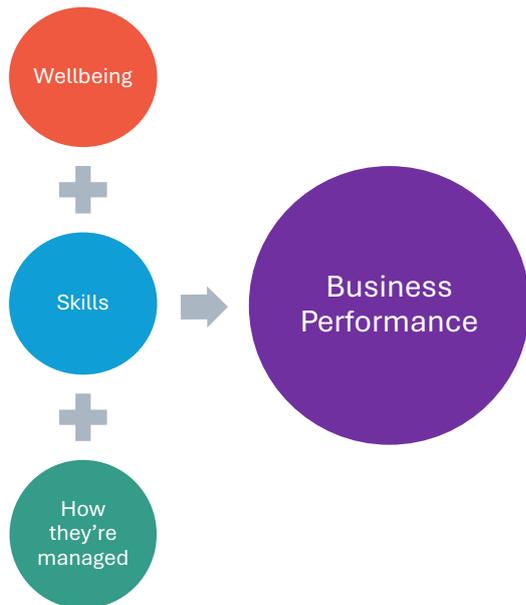
How to improve management practices in your business

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On behalf of the Northern Ireland Productivity Forum

## Why does management matter?

Good management is crucial for any business. Alongside their wellbeing and skills, how employees are managed determines a business's success.



International evidence shows that good management practices are associated with:

- Higher profits
- Higher productivity
- Faster growth
- Being more competitive
- Greater resilience
- Better staff retention

## What is good management?

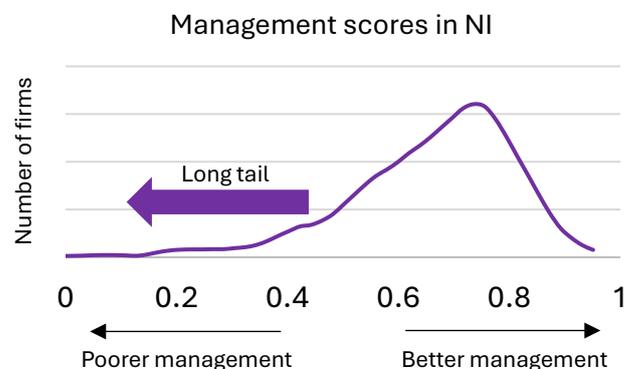
Best practice combines leadership, culture, and ambition, to ensure people realise their full potential. There are four key areas:

1. **Continuous improvement:** proactively monitoring & improving processes.
2. **Key performance indicators:** frequently monitoring & reviewing KPIs.
3. **Targets:** stretching, tracked & reviewed.
4. **Employment practices:** hiring, training, and tracking & rewarding good performance.

## How well are NI businesses doing?

The [Northern Ireland Productivity Forum](#) ran a survey of local businesses to understand management practices in NI.

While there are firms that have adopted best practice and score close to 1, the survey found there is a 'long tail' of businesses that lag behind best practice and score closer to 0.



Firms that score more poorly than their peers:

- Have fewer employees.
- Have fewer managers qualified to degree level.
- Do not provide regular leadership training for managers.
- Generate a high proportion of their turnover from the local NI market.

## Key takeaways

1. Adopting best practice in management requires investment in managers, including regular leadership training.
2. Businesses with characteristics associated with poorer management practices should proactively seek opportunities to improve their managers.
3. Greater adoption of new technology is found in businesses with management practices closer to best practice.

Read the evidence: [Do managers matter? Management practices in post-COVID Northern Ireland](#)

Available at [www.productivity.ac.uk](http://www.productivity.ac.uk)

## Self-assessment

An important part of understanding your business's management practices is self-assessment.

The 10 questions below are designed to quickly evaluate how close the management practices of your business are to best practice.

### Leadership

1. Does your business have regular training (at least every 12 months) for developing the management & leadership skills of your managers?  No  Yes
2. Does your business have targets with a mix of timeframes (both under and over 1 year)? (Examples include rates of on-time delivery, value of sales)  No  Yes
3. If yes to Q2, are all employees (both managers and non-managers) aware of your business's targets?  No  Yes

### Culture

4. Do you have a system in place to anticipate problems, and that encourages employees to identify these, suggest improvements, and take action?  No  Yes
5. Do you provide a clear and defined pathway for career progression within your business?  No  Yes
6. Do all employees at your business have an annual performance review?  No  Yes
7. Do you have a system in place to identify and address employee underperformance?  No  Yes
8. Does your business have both a training plan and a dedicated budget for training?  No  Yes

### Ambition

9. Does your business have a growth plan for the next 5 years?  No  Yes
10. Do you track more than 3 key performance indicators (KPIs) of your business's performance, and is performance against these indicators reviewed at least monthly? (Examples include sales, customer satisfaction, waste)  No  Yes

### Scoring

Count the number of questions where you responded 'Yes', and match your score to the description below:

Total Yes:

- **0-5:** While a low score does not necessarily indicate poor business performance, this suggests that your business is currently further away from best practice, and would benefit from reviewing its management practices.
- **6-8:** This is a score where there is still room for improvement. It would be worthwhile taking advantage of the opportunities available to improve your business's management practices.
- **9-10:** This score suggests your business has management practices close to best practice.

## What support is available?

There are seven key areas you should consider when choosing management training for your business.

### 1. Ways to improve

There are 3 main ways to improve your firm's management practices:

1. **Internally:** Using self-assessment to identify areas for improvement.
2. **Externally:** Accessing training provided by external providers.
3. **Learning from others:** Learning from the experience of others, such as within a supply-chain, from other industries, or through business organisations.

### 2. Types of management training

There are 3 main types of management training:

1. **Training courses:** These cover different aspects of management and leadership, and may provide a qualification on completion.
2. **Bespoke and tailored support:** Some providers offer the option of designing or tailoring training to your requirements. This may include the option to have training provided onsite at your place of business.
3. **Peer mentoring:** Learning from other managers provides an additional perspective on how to run a successful team and business. For example, the [Help to Grow](#) management course includes 10 hours of one-to-one support with a mentor.

### 3. Qualifications

Certain training courses will provide a recognised qualification on completion:

- These can include Awards, Certificates, and Diplomas.
- Qualifications can be accredited by an external organisation, such as The Institute of Leadership & Management (ILM), the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), or The Chartered Management Institute (CMI).
- Accredited and non-accredited courses are both offered by FE colleges, universities, & private providers.
- Depending on experience, managers may need to complete lower qualification levels before starting more advanced levels.

### 4. Manager level

Choosing the right training course will depend on a manager's level of responsibility and existing experience:

- Courses are usually targeted at a specific level of manager (see table on next page).
- Specific training is also available for CEOs and Directors through [Invest NI](#) and the [Institute of Directors](#).

### 5. Business size

The size of your business will determine what training is best suited:

- For small & medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), courses for individual managers may be most accessible: the Help to Grow programme is specifically aimed at SMEs.
- For businesses wanting to train many managers, hiring a provider for onsite training may be more suitable.

### 6. Cost

The cost of management courses ranges from free to over £5,000:

- Free courses are shorter and/or online, and generally do not lead to a qualification.
- Businesses may be eligible to apply for funding towards the cost of training: some courses are partially/fully funded by the NI Department for the Economy, through recent programmes such as [Skill Up](#).
- Higher cost courses are often targeted at larger firms or those with more extensive training requirements.

### 7. Mode of delivery

Training courses are delivered in several ways:

- Many courses are offered online, or online with an in-person element.
- In-person courses are usually offered at the provider's training centre/campus. Most in-person courses are available in Belfast. Some are offered in other areas of NI, particularly those through FE colleges.
- The numbers taking a course are often restricted, and so may require being booked well in advance.
- Courses range from a single day, to being part-time (PT) and spread over 1 year.

## Accredited management qualifications & training available in Northern Ireland

Qualification	Provider	Duration	Delivery	Cost	
<b>New &amp; Junior managers:</b> ILM 2 & 3 CIPD Level 3 CMI Levels 2, 3 & 4	ILM 2 <a href="#">Beckinridge</a>	2 days	Online	£1,115 + VAT	
	ILM 2 & 3	<a href="#">Elite Regional Training (NI) Ltd</a>	4 days	Online, in-person, customised	£750-£1,500 + VAT
		<a href="#">The Knowledge Academy</a>	1-5 days	Online, in-person, customised	£2,995-£5,295
	ILM 3	<a href="#">North West Regional College</a>	15 weeks PT	In-person	£140-£182
		<a href="#">South West College</a>	15 weeks PT	In-person	£199-£240
		<a href="#">Belfast Met</a>	16 weeks PT	In-person	£280
		<a href="#">Northern Regional College</a>	1 year PT	Online	£246-£336
		<a href="#">NICVA</a>	6 weeks PT	Online	£365-£520
	CIPD 3	<a href="#">Southern Regional College</a>	10 weeks	Online, in-person	Free-£179
		<a href="#">North West Regional College</a>	32 weeks PT	In-person	£205
CMI 2,3 & 4	<a href="#">The Knowledge Academy</a>	1-4 days	Online, in-person, customised	£2,995-£5,295	
<b>Middle managers:</b> ILM Levels 4 & 5 CIPD Level 5 CMI Levels 5 & 6	ILM 4 <a href="#">Think People</a>	5 months PT	Online, in-person	£1,050-£2,275 + VAT	
	ILM 4 & 5	<a href="#">Rutledge</a>	4 months PT	Online	£525-£925 + VAT
		<a href="#">Beckinridge</a>	2-3 days	Online	£1,115-£1,410 + VAT
	ILM 5	<a href="#">Elite Training (NI) Ltd</a>	4 days	Online, in-person, customised	£850-£1,650 + VAT
		<a href="#">The Knowledge Academy</a>	2-5 days	Online, in-person, customised	£2,995-£5,295
		<a href="#">South West College</a>	16 weeks PT	In-person	£295
		<a href="#">Belfast Met</a>	16-25 weeks PT	Online, in-person	£360-£476
		<a href="#">NICVA</a>	4 months PT	Online, in-person	£705-£1,500
		<a href="#">North West Regional College</a>	26 weeks PT	Online, in-person	£200-£500
	CIPD 5	<a href="#">Northern Regional College</a>	1 year PT	Online	£357-£532
<a href="#">Northern Regional College</a>		1 year PT	In-person	£263-£525	
<a href="#">North West Regional College</a>		35 weeks PT	Online, in-person	£1,025	
CMI 5	<a href="#">The Knowledge Academy</a>	1-4 days	Online, in-person, customised	£2,995-£5,295	
	<a href="#">South Eastern Regional College</a>	6 weeks-1 year PT	Online, in-person	£98-£564	
<b>Senior managers:</b> ILM Levels 6 & 7 CIPD Level 7 CMI levels 7 & 8	ILM 7	<a href="#">Belfast Met</a>	14 weeks PT	In-person	£995
		<a href="#">NICVA</a>	3 months PT	In-person	£300-£1,300
	CIPD 7	<a href="#">Southern Regional College</a>	16 weeks-1 year PT	Online, in-person	£266-£843
		<a href="#">The Knowledge Academy</a>	1-4 days	Online, in-person, customised	£2,995-£5,295
	CMI 7	<a href="#">South Eastern Regional College</a>	1 year PT	Online	£1,538

### Example additional courses

<b>Queen's University</b>	<a href="#">Help to Grow Management Course</a>	<b>Ulster University</b>	<a href="#">Help to Grow Management Course</a>
<b>Open University</b>	<a href="#">Developing team leader skills</a>	<b>Invest NI</b>	<a href="#">Leader Programme</a>
<b>Enterprise Causeway</b>	<a href="#">Lead2Grow Leadership Development</a>	<b>NI Chamber of Commerce &amp; Industry</b>	<a href="#">Middle Management Training</a>
<b>Centre for Competitiveness &amp; Queen's University</b>	<a href="#">Advanced Manufacturing Leadership Programme</a>	Visit <a href="http://nibusinessinfo.co.uk">nibusinessinfo.co.uk</a> for further information on staff training & development, online courses, & available government support	

Notes: It is important to research courses before applying to understand their suitability and content; PT = part-time; Course details as of July 2024.

The Northern Ireland Productivity Forum is based at [Queen's Business School](#), and is part of The Productivity Institute ([www.productivity.ac.uk](http://www.productivity.ac.uk)), a UK-wide organisation that works across academia, business and policy to better understand, measure and enable productivity across the UK. This work was supported by the Economic and Social Research Council [grant number ES/V002740/1].